

# Homelessness and Supportive Housing in Ramsey County

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# What's the Problem?

- On any given night:
  - At least 800,000 are homeless in the U.S.
  - 1,600 are homeless in Ramsey County
  - 3,000 – 4,000 people in Ramsey County do not have a place of their own but have found temporary lodging with friends or family

# What's the Problem

- In Ramsey County on any given night:
  - 34% of people who are homeless are adult men
  - 28% are adult women
  - 33% are children with one or both parents
  - 5% are unaccompanied youth under age 21

# Overview

- In 2005, 4,543 individuals used emergency shelter in Ramsey County
  - An 8% increase since 2003
  - 3,907 adults (9% increase from 2003)
  - 636 children (.5% decrease from 2003)

# Our Response to Homelessness: Shelter and Housing

- 531 shelter beds (homeless shelters and domestic violence shelters)
  - 16 beds for unaccompanied youth
  - 6 beds for teen moms and their children
  - 284 beds for single adults (40 additional beds for single women coming soon)
  - 85 beds for parents with children
  - 140 beds for women (and their children) fleeing domestic violence

# Our Response to Homelessness: Shelter and Housing (cont)

- We have 441 units of transitional housing
  - 219 for single adults
  - 152 for families with children
  - 70 for unaccompanied youth

# Our Response to Homelessness: Shelter and Housing (cont)

- We have 582 units of permanent supportive housing
  - 367 units for single adults
  - 203 units for families with children
  - 12 beds for homeless youth

# Why People Become Homeless

- Poverty
- Lack of affordable housing
- Physical or learning disability
- Loss or incapacity of personal support network
- Etc., etc.

# Poverty and Affordability

- A renter earning \$20,540/yr can afford to pay \$500/mo in rent
- Between 2000 – 2004, percentage of rental units renting at or below \$500 in MN went from 39% to 26%.
- Between 2000 – 2004, number of households in MN earning less than \$20,000/yr increased by more than 10,000
- For every apartment renting at \$500 or less, there are 3 households earning \$20,000 or less

# Poverty (continued)

- In 2004, 52,000 residents in Ramsey County lived in poverty (10.7% of the county population)
- Nearly 15% of the children in Ramsey County under age 18 live in poverty

# Disability

- In 2003, 47% of homeless adults claimed to have significant mental health problems
- 25% of homeless adults (30% of adult men) report a recent diagnosis of alcohol or substance abuse disorder.
- 50% of homeless adults say they have a substance abuse problem.
- In studies of the MFIP program, the single greatest predictor of reaching the 60 month limit is a learning disability.

# Is it any wonder?

- 1% of the U.S. population will experience homelessness in any given year
- 10% of people living in poverty will experience homelessness

	1986	1997	2005
<b>HUD Fair Market Rent 2-Bedroom Apt</b>	<b>\$480</b>	<b>\$621</b>	<b>\$928</b>
<b>AFDC/TANF Monthly Grant Family of 4</b>	<b>\$621 (cash)</b>	<b>\$621 (cash)</b>	<b>\$621 (cash)</b>

# What Can Be Done About Homelessness?

- Managing the problem hasn't worked
- Homelessness is very costly
- In Ramsey County, we are spending more than \$8 million per year in local, state and federal resources earmarked to respond to homelessness
- This does not count the cost of emergency room health care, jail and prison time, detox use and other emergency services.

# The Ramsey County Plan to End Homelessness

- Part I: Ending Long Term Homelessness
  - 920 units of permanent supportive housing
  - Prevent long-term homelessness
  - Increase and leverage public investment
  - Improve coordination and delivery of services and housing
  - Build a community-wide response to homelessness

# Why Supportive Housing

- Research has demonstrated that combining housing with supportive services for people with serious and chronic disabilities works:
  - It is cost effective – significantly less use of emergency services/treatment/incarceration
  - It builds stability and gives people a chance to succeed

# The St. Paul / Ramsey County Plan to End Homelessness

- Part II – Building a community without homelessness
- Prevention
  - Create an early warning network that identifies households at risk and directs them to the help they need
  - Stop discharging people from jails and hospitals into homelessness
- Preserve our affordable housing

# The Plan to End Homelessness

- Expanding housing opportunities
  - Advocate for a renewed federal commitment to the Housing Choice Voucher Program
  - Create 500 new housing vouchers
- Building and supporting stability
  - Renewed focus on improving household income
    - Better employment outcomes
    - Applying and receiving all eligible benefits

# The Plan to End Homelessness

- Ending Homelessness for unaccompanied and parenting youth
  - Expand outreach services
  - 100 additional housing vouchers earmarked for youth under age 21
- Commit to system improvements
  - Improve the information flow on available housing and services
  - Better training and technical assistance for providers
  - Improve provider cultural and linguistic competence

# For More Information:

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